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SUBJECT: US PRESIDENT BUSH ON ISRAELI OFFENSIVE AGAINST LEBANON; USG
CHARGES CHAVEZ WITH PROMOTING TERRORISM; STATUS OF NEW US AMBASSADOR
TO ARGENTINA; 07/14/06;BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Local papers lead with US President George W. Bush supporting Israeli offensive against Lebanon after the Hezbollah militia captured two Israeli soldiers on Wednesday; the USG accusing Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez of promoting terrorism; and Ambassador Wayne's confirmed nomination to be the new US Ambassador to Argentina being postponed. Local dailies also report on The Hague World Court rejection of Argentina's request that two European firms halt construction of two paper mills in Uruguay until environmental impact can be fully assessed.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Bush justifies military offensive against the Lebanon"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (07/14) "Contradicting other G8 and EU powers, US President George W. Bush yesterday justified Israel's attacks against Lebanon. However, he warned that Israel would have to be careful not to weaken the Beirut government because 'the day after' could jeopardize its interests even further.

"Bush said 'Israel has the right to defend itself.' White House support for Israel has widened discord with the rest of the so-called international 'quartet' (the EU, the UN and Russia), which rejected the Israeli offensive or considered it 'disproportionate.'

"This point of disagreement will also hinder Bush's plans to come to a common position vis-à-vis Iran and North Korea's nuclear ambitions while he tries to find a way out for the troops in Iraq, which should include multilateral support."

- "The US vetoes (UN) resolution against the Jewish State"

Business-financial "El Cronista" reports (07/14) "Yesterday, the US vetoed a resolution submitted by Qatar to the UN Security Council, which condemned Israel's military incursions into the Gaza Strip.

"The UK, Peru, Denmark and Slovakia abstained from the vote. However, the measure did not progress in spite of ten votes in its favor.

"It is not the first time the US vetoes a resolution at the UN Security Council, which is related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The last time it did so was in October 2004."

- "Bush supports Israel: 'Israel has the right to defend itself'"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín,"

writes (07/14) "US President George W. Bush openly supported the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and the Gaza Strip by saying that 'Israel has the right to defend itself' and that kidnapped soldiers should be released.

"While Bush's statements were widely praised by the US Jewish community, they unleashed tension in Europe, which will not favor the search for a joint solution. As a matter of fact, the EU termed the use of Israeli force as 'disproportionate' while Russia urged to avoid 'an open confrontation in the region.' US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, also in Germany, downplayed Bush's statements by saying that the USG asked for 'moderation' from Israel. Rice dismissed criticism of the military actions launched against Lebanon."

- "Bush warns Syria and Iran defends it"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" reports (07/14) "In the midst of an escalation of war in the Middle East, the US confirmed its support for Israel and joined it in suspecting Syria's role in fueling the crisis. This sparked Iran's reaction, which warned against an attack on the Arab country.

"While in Germany, US President George W. Bush said that 'Israel has the right to defend itself'..., but whatever it does 'should not weaken' the Lebanese administration.

"... Bush also referred to Syria as suspected, along with Iran, of masterminding the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers."

- "Steps of a dangerous retreat"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," opines (07/14) "... Now, the challenge for Olmert and his government to undo history is double. The Israeli military leader who referred to an occupation of at least part of Lebanon seems to have forgotten

that between 1982 and 2000, Israel occupied and maintained a so-called 'security area' in South Lebanon with the same excuse, i.e., eliminating hostile forces. Neither the grabbing of the Strip since the start of the Six Day War in the 60s nor the partial occupation of Lebanon bore the expected fruits, and there is no clear reason why this time the result would be different.

"This temptation to retreat is strong... With its disproportionate attacks of these days, Israel's legitimate cause seems to be fading...

"... The Israeli version of events starts to be questioned by friendly countries like the US.

"No one doubts the legitimate right of a country to defend itself, but it is clear that the lack of proportion of its means has not obtained the same support as at other times."

- "Washington hints that Chavez is another promoter of terrorism"

Conservative "La Prensa" reads (07/14) "The USG warned that Venezuela's entry into the UN Security Council could have a 'negative impact' while an influential legislator hinted that Venezuela is on the verge of being considered a 'promoter' of terrorism.

"Franc C. Urbancic, number two at the Office of Coordination for Counter-terrorism at the US Department of State, pointed out that the Chavez regime 'is not in line with the world,' and he added that Chavez's 'irresponsible rhetoric' and 'negative impact' could expand if Venezuela obtains a seat on the UN Security Council.

"It is the first time the US Department of State expresses its fears vis-à-vis Venezuela's possible entry into the UN Security Council in replacement of Argentina."

- "The nomination of the US Ambassador to Argentina is blocked again"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín,"

comments (07/14) "The confirmation of new US Ambassador to Argentina, Earl Anthony Wayne, has been blocked once again. No one in Washington dares predict when he will be confirmed, or even whether he will manage to be confirmed.

"... This time, the one who filed an objection to Wayne's nomination was Republican Senator from Nevada John Ensign. While Wayne has already been confirmed by the (Senate Foreign Relations) Committee, Ensign managed to hold his consideration by the full Senate. And the reason is exactly the same one that Mel Martinez filed (that Wayne refused to increase funds for Radio and TV Marti).

"... In fact, USG and Argentine officials confirmed to 'Clarín' that Wayne would be in Argentina no later than September. No one thought that another senator could hold up his nomination again. Because the US Congress begins its recess the first week of August, they now fear the confirmation could be postponed to September.

"A US Senate Foreign Relations Committee told 'Clarín' 'Not all Republican senators agree with what is happening.' 'Wayne is not a controversial figure. He handles financial issues very well, and this is something important in Argentina. This is why what is happening does not reflect everyone's thinking. On the contrary, some senators believe that not having a representative in Argentina is a disadvantage.'

"... While the confirmation could be postponed indefinitely, it is also possible that it will happen before the recess."

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